Children's Home. Ohio Plan

HV
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1885

PLAN AND DESCRIPTION

OF A

MODEL

CHILDREN'S HOME.

PUBLISHED BY THE

Ohio. BOARD OF STATE CHARITIES

OF OHIO.

1885.

HV 742
O3 A5
1885

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INDEX.

	PAGE.
Architect	20
Ash Rooms	20
Bath Rooms	11
Beds	23
Blinds, Outside	17
Carpets, No	15
Chapel	17
Closets	12
Conveniences	28
Cost	22
Dining Room	19
Dumb Waiters	16
Finish, Natural Wood	17
Floors, Hard Wood	15
Floors, Oil Finish	16
Fire-Escapes	18
Fire-Places	14
Fire-Proof	15
General Arrangement	10
Help, Sleeping Rooms for	13
Hospital	12
Introduction	5
Kitchen Garden School	20
Kitchen	19
Law relating to Children in Infirmaries	6
Laundry	19
Location	9
Natural Wood	17
Number of Children	21
Nursery	11
Object of Home	11
Plan, Reasons for Publishing	7
Play Grounds	9
Play Grounds, Separate	10
Porch, Enclosed	18
School House	23
Sewing Room	12
Sinks, Finish of	18
Stairs	17
Steam Heating	16
Suggestions for a Model Home	9
Summary	24
Superintendent of Construction	20
Transoms	15
Ventilation	13
Washing Rooms	11
Water	10
Water Closets	22
Wet Clothes Shute	16
Windows	14

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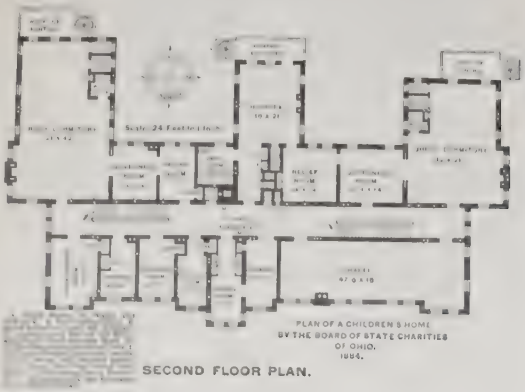

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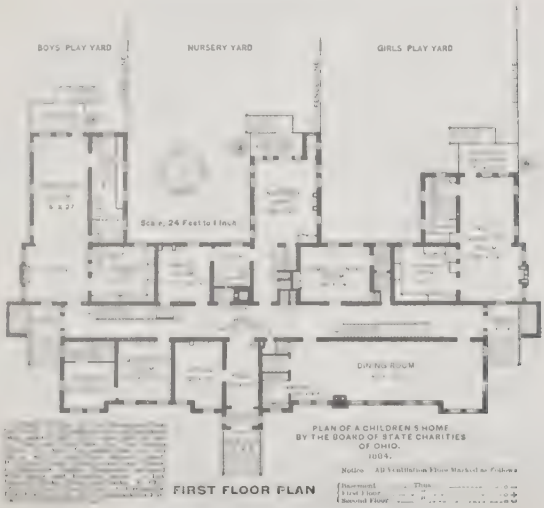

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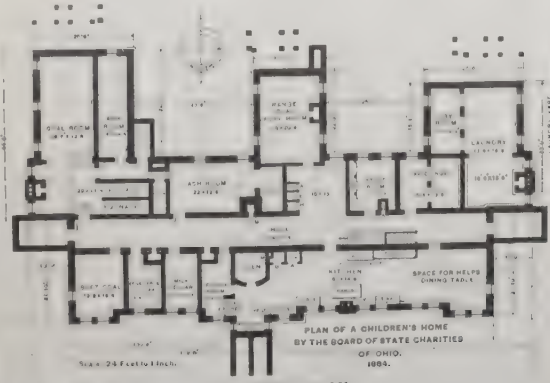

FOUNDATION PLAN.

PREFACE.

THE great inhumanity and social wrong growing out of the presence of children in the County Infirmaries of the State has deeply impressed the BOARD OF STATE CHARITIES from the beginning of its supervision of public institutions, and their removal has been a purpose steadily pursued by the Board until, by the law of April 9th, 1883, hereto appended, the duty of caring for these children of misfortune and protecting them from the debasing influences which are, without exception, found in such surroundings, was laid upon the Commissioners of the several counties of the State. This law now makes the correction of this great wrong possible, and places the duty of removing the children, so long and hurtfully exposed to such evil communications, upon the Commissioners, and the dictates of humanity, the demands of social economy and the pride of the State all urge for a prompt and thorough execution of the sacred trust. In the judgment of the Board, that amendment of the law which permits and contemplates maintaining, without contamination, the children in County Infirmaries, if "separated from the adult paupers therein," is absolutely impracticable.

[House Bill No. 389.]

AN ACT

To amend Section 2 of an act passed April 9, 1883, entitled an "act to provide for the protection of children" (O. L. v. 80, p. 102).

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio*, That section two of the aforesaid act be amended to read as follows:

Child not to be kept in infirmary unless separated from adults.

SEC. 2. That from and after the passage of this act it shall not be lawful to keep or maintain in any county infirmary in this State, unless separated from the adult paupers therein, any child or children entitled to admission into a children's home, except such as are imbecile, idiotic, or insane. And the board of commissioners of any county in the State, where such a home has not already been provided, may make temporary provision for such children by transferring them to the nearest children's home, where they can be received and kept at the expense of the county, or by leasing suitable premises for that purpose, which shall be furnished, provided and managed in all respects as now provided by law for the support and management of children's homes in the State of Ohio.

Commissioners to provide for such in children's homes.

SEC. 3. That said Section 2 of the act of April 9, 1883, be and the same is hereby repealed; and this act take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

A. D. MARSH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

JOHN G. WARWICK,
President of the Senate.

Passed March 27, 1884.

REASONS FOR PUBLICATION OF PLAN.

The requirements of this law have caused a large number of "children's homes" to be projected during the past year, and as all plans for such buildings have to be submitted to the Board of State Charities, quite a number have been presented to the Board for their examination and suggestions. In some cases these plans have been prepared, under the direction of County Commissioners, by Architects who have paid no special attention to the requirements of such homes, and arranged with little reference to the fundamental principles which should control them, and criticisms or suggestions offered on such plans can be of little use or satisfaction to either party.

In the construction and arrangement of any dwelling the conditions which affect the health of the inmates should be carefully considered; but this becomes of much more importance when the house is to be occupied by a considerable number of persons, especially children. Childhood, at best, is subject to epidemic and contagious diseases, and, when children are to any extent crowded, disastrous results can be avoided only by the most healthful conditions.

As the arrangement and construction of these homes are to have a vital influence on the health of the inmates and the economy of their administration during the entire life of the buildings, it is manifestly a subject of great importance, both to the occupants of the homes and to the taxpayers of the counties interested.

It costs no more to build a home well planned and adapted to its purpose than one of equal size, inconvenient in arrangement and vexatious and expensive in administration.

The *moral tone* of any such home, too, is vitally affected by the arrangement of its departments as to separation and sun exposure.

Under these circumstances the Board have thought that it might aid County Commissioners and Architects if a plan for a children's home could be published which should embrace the vital characteristics of such a building, with such suggestions as to arrangements and conveniences as are suggested by the experience of the most successful children's homes of the State. It cannot be expected that any plan will, in size or every detail, be adapted to the requirements of each location. Peculiarities will exist in each family and location which may require an adaptation of the plan to local needs; but the Board have aimed to suggest the essential features of such a home with the best arrangements for its economical and healthful administration in the accompanying plan for a MODEL CHILDREN'S HOME.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A MODEL CHILDREN'S HOME.

LOCATION.

The first requisite for a healthy home for children is a *dry*, *airy* and *sunny* location; nothing can make up for the want of either of these essential conditions.

The building should be located on a water-shed or knoll from which the surface water will quickly run off. It should be open on all sides to the free circulation of air, and that air not in the slightest degree tainted with sewer or cess-pool impurities. The building should, at any sacrifice, be made to face the north, so as to give the rear, or *children's part*, the benefit of a *southern exposure*. Every room where children are congregated should be submitted to the purifying influence of a sun bath every day the sun shines. Children suffer more from the absence of the sun's rays than do adults. Adults have only to keep alive; children have to keep alive and to grow. This location of the children's rooms also locates their

PLAY GROUNDS

on the sunny side of the house, thus giving the children at least two months more of dry ground for out-door exercise and recreation; and avoids entirely the use of the damp, mouldy ground on the north side of a large house.

It may be claimed that the officers and adult members of the family need the benefit of a sun exposure for their living rooms. This would be well; but that part of the family is not confined to their rooms, and much of the time do secure the benefit of a sun exposure which the children would not if their rooms were reversed; besides, the adult family is not liable to the many diseases of childhood, and it should never be forgotten, in all the arrangements of the house, that it is a home for the children and they are entitled to the best of it.

WATER.

A supply of pure water sufficient for house use, including baths, and abundant for sewerage purposes *at all times*, is of vital importance. No location should be considered that does not furnish this vital requisite.

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT.

The day and sleeping rooms for the boys and girls should be perfectly separated.

Each day room should have connected with it an ample, dry, airy playground; then, with separate sleeping-rooms over the day-rooms, and with separate stairs, the separation of the sexes may be fully secured.

If the children meet in a common dining-room for meals, and in the school room for daily study, they become sufficiently acquainted, and all the stimulus and modifying influence of the sexes are secured, and, as they are at such times under the eye of an attendant or teacher, no injurious influence will result. The separation of the sexes, except as above suggested, is

of the utmost importance. The vile character of the "infirmary taint," which is manifested in many of the children from those institutions, is more terrible than can be even suggested, and comes from the promiscuous intercourse of the children with the adult paupers, and can only be avoided by careful separation.

The sole object of these homes should be the preparation of children for adoption or service in good families. For that purpose nothing is more important than the cultivation of that native modesty and delicacy, which is as strong naturally in the unfortunate as in the well born, and will assert itself if it is not schooled out by coarse and improper exposure and surroundings. This suggestion cannot be too strongly emphasized.

WASHING AND BATH-ROOMS

should be ample, and on the first story, located near the entrance from the play-grounds; the water closets for day use should be connected with them. The same conveniences should be connected with the sleeping rooms for night use. All of these arrangements should be perfectly ventilated, and arranged so as to cultivate a sense of modesty and propriety. The *hand and face washing* should be by running water. This can be secured with little or no increased use of water or expense, and will avoid contagion of eye and skin diseases.

THE NURSERY,

or infant-room, should be especially sunny and healthful, as its inmates are the most difficult to preserve in health. It should have conveniences for preparing proper food and drying clothing.

apartments should be provided for separating and conveniently caring for the sick. In the accompanying plan the "convalescent-room" can be used, when required, for a separate apartment of the hospital.

CLOSETS,

ample for clothing in use, and separate ones for storing clothing and bedding out of season, should be provided; also small ones for children's work and toys for each day room and the infant-room—one for hats and bonnets in each day room, and one for brooms, pails, etc., for each department. Large closets should be well ventilated. Shelving made of slats is an improvement over solid boards.

A DRYING-CLOSET,

finished with movable shelves of open slats, is greatly approved of by those who have used them, and should be connected with each sleeping-room and the nursery. It should be large enough to accommodate the clothes, beds and bedding which may require its use, and should have ample steam pipes for heating in winter and windows for summer use.

This will be found a great convenience and aid greatly in keeping the sleeping-rooms sweet and tidy.

A SEWING-ROOM,

light, and with large and conveniently-arranged closets and drawers for storing materials and made garments, will be a great convenience.

SLEEPING-ROOMS FOR THE HELP

should not be connected with the children's rooms.

VENTILATION.

Ample provision should be made for a systematic and thorough change of air in all of the rooms occupied by children.

By carrying up round, smooth flues, two or more from each room, in the inner walls (the outer walls, by becoming chilled, will prevent good draft) up to the attic, there to connect with galvanized iron pipes carried out through the roof, it will, without occupying any space and increasing the cost but slightly, greatly promote ventilation, and, when aided by an open grate in each important room, should secure healthful air when the room is not crowded.

But as pure, fresh air is an essential requisite for rooms occupied by a considerable number of persons, every possible provision should be adopted to secure it.

In planning for a new building, transom windows should be provided for, as the very best method of introducing fresh air from the outside safely.

But, in a house already constructed, a convenient method of introducing outside air, without the liability of dangerous drafts, is to place a board, say two inches in height, across the bottom of the window, thus preventing the ingress of air at that point: then the lower sash, when raised, will admit air between the sashes with an upward direction, and create no drafts on the heads of the occupants.

The amount of air thus introduced can be regulated by the number of windows raised.

FIRE-PLACES

should be placed in each living room, especially day-rooms, nursery and hospital. In these rooms, during much of the year, grates are not only a great luxury, but a healthful and economical arrangement. The Jackson Ventilating Grate (manufactured by C. A. Jackson & Bros., No. 77 Beekman street, New York,) gives a strong inflow of fresh, warmed air from out of doors, and greatly increases the radiating power of the fire itself, and aids ventilation. It is economical and healthful.

WINDOWS

should be as abundant as possible. There is little danger of too much light or sun in such a house; windows can be shaded as required, but, if omitted, the purifying influence of the sun and the cheerful presence of its light are permanently excluded.

For the *top portions* of the windows of the day, sleeping and dining-rooms, and the nursery and hospital, a transom, *hinged at the bottom*, makes a safe and convenient method of admitting outside air without any draft on the occupants, and will be found very useful.

The transom section of the window should be eight (8) to twelve (12) inches in height, leaving the lower portion of the window as usually constructed.

TRANSOMS.

There should be movable transoms over all doors to facilitate ventilation.

FIRE-PROOF.

It is but just that all buildings where a considerable number of persons are to be congregated and in any measure confined, should be so nearly fire proof as to allow an abundant opportunity for escape. This may be secured by a thoroughly fire-proof construction, and measurably so by building it on "the slow combustion plan," or, if the ordinary method of building is adopted, by using iron girders and brick arching over the furnace, and at especially exposed points.

A fire-proof building costs more in its construction, but saves in the fire risk and in its results, is but a little more expensive than the ordinary method, and much more satisfactory. The State, after painful experience and heavy losses by fire, now constructs all of its buildings on the fire-proof principle.

FLOORS

in all of the children's rooms should be of hard wood. Hard maple is the closest grained and makes the best floor. Ash or oak makes a good floor if no heart-grain is used. Nothing but boards having the *grain on edge* should ever be allowed to go into the floor. No carpet in these rooms should be used, and if even a small number of heart-grained boards are used, the frequent washing and drying will very soon warp the heart-grain into slivers and destroy the smoothness of the entire floor. If properly provided for in

the contract, and insisted upon in the construction, a permanently smooth and durable floor may be secured without increased cost. Two coats of raw linseed oil *well mopped in* when put on, is the best finish for exposed floors.

STEAM

seems to be the only reliable means of warming the various parts of a large house economically and surely. "Ventilating Radiators" are made which admit an inflow of outside air, warmed as it enters. And, when only direct radiation is desired, the outside air can be shut off. This is an additional means of keeping pure the air of crowded rooms which should not be omitted.

A WET CLOTHES SHUTE

is a galvanized iron pipe, leading from the second story to a water-tight box in the basement, eight (8) to ten (10) inches in diameter. This pipe has openings on the hospital and nursery floors to receive soiled articles of clothes from these apartments. Through the pipe a small flow of water is maintained, thrown upon the sides of the same, thus preventing all odors arising from articles thrown in, and keeping the box in the basement full to its overflow of water. From this box in the basement the articles can be removed for thorough washing at convenience. This is highly recommended by those using it as a great convenience, healthful and neat.

DUMB WAITERS.

The "Dumb Waiters" should be constructed with brick walls to avoid the liability to carry fire from story to story.

The machinery is simple, but should be of the most approved pattern and thorough construction, otherwise they will probably soon become difficult to work, and useless. They may be made so as to be of good service, but if roughly constructed will be of no value.

NATURAL WOOD.

All of the woodwork inside of the house, if finished in its natural colors, will be found much easier cleaned and give a more furnished expression to the rooms. It costs but little more than painting, and, if properly done, is much more permanent and agreeable.

OUTSIDE BLINDS

add greatly to the comfort and coolness of the house, and should be used on all children's homes. They are the most healthful and economical shades.

CHAPEL.

Each home should have a large room for Sabbath service and public occasions. National and family festivals should be observed for their educational influence, and for the variety they bring to the monotonous life of an institution home. This, practically, will not be done, except a room of sufficient size and conveniently situated is provided.

STAIRS.

Particular attention should be given that the stairs are easy. The steps are often too high and narrow—they may be too low. Seven (7) inches rise and twelve (12) inches tread is not far from the natural step. They should in no case be steeper than these figures will make them.

If iron stairs are used, a covering of linoleum prevents noise and slipping, and is very desirable. It may be obtained, prepared especially for this purpose, at a small expense.

AN ENCLOSED PORCH,

so constructed that it may be enclosed with glass windows in winter which may be removed in summer, will be found a great convenience and a healthful attachment to the girls' day room, and especially so for the nursery and hospital.

FIRE ESCAPES,

if constructed of wood, in Well form, with not too narrow steps, and with a hand rail on outer side, will afford exit in case a fire should cut off escape by the house stairs. This, of course, will not be necessary, if the house is made fire proof. If accessible from the rear roofs, and come within five (5) or six (6) feet of the ground, they will afford the necessary aid. The escape should be closed at the bottom by a slight cover, to prevent ascents; but the cover should be so fastened as to open on a slight pressure from within, otherwise it might prove a trap rather than an escape.

SINKS

for drawing water and wasting slops are provided in the different departments of the accompanying plan; but, by causing all of the water closets to be finished as urinals, *i.e.*, by having the seats made to be raised and the frame covered with lead or a porcelain cover, these sinks may be omitted and the water closets used for wasting slops and the faucets of the bath-tubs

used to draw water. The more orderly housekeepers, however, much prefer the sinks. With their use the bath-tubs are kept dry and neat; but of much more importance is the fact that through the sinks no large substances can be thrown into the pipes. And this is a liability difficult to control when the water closets are used for this purpose. In this way the sinks are found economical as well as an element of neatness and order. It is well, however, under all circumstances, to finish the water closets as urinals, and lead, if used, should be in one sheet and extending over the edges of the frame.

THE DINING-ROOM

for the children is located in the front part of the house, and this locates the

KITCHEN

immediately under it. In some respects this is not the most desirable location for these rooms; but the dining room, having to be occupied but a small part of the time, and thus located, relieves the sunny side of the house of a large apartment. It is thought the advantages much overbalance the minor objections to the location. If properly ventilated by a separate flue adjoining the stove or range flue, and with transom windows, the kitchen will not be found objectionable in this location. The dining-room should be also especially well ventilated.

THE LAUNDRY

is placed under the girls' day-room from motives of economy. A separate building would be preferable, but quite expensive, and, in winter, liable to give trouble.

With abundant ventilation, by the use of a large flue adjoining the flue of the laundry stove, and properly arranged windows, the room can be kept ventilated, so as to remove the objections, which would otherwise exist, to placing the laundry in the main house.

ASH ROOMS

are provided in the basement. The use of these rooms to store the accumulated ashes of the winter, to be removed in the spring or more frequently if convenient, will be found to add greatly to the neatness and appearance of the grounds. There should be ash-pits of sufficient size under each fireplace.

A KITCHEN-GARDEN SCHOOL,

which is a most useful and brightening accessory, if it should be found practicable, can be carried on in the chapel without interfering materially with its neatness or general use, and better than incur the expense of a separate room.

ARCHITECTS.

However satisfactory the main features of the accompanying plan may be, it is best that a capable architect be employed to provide for the details of the construction. An honest and determined

SUPERINTENDENT

will be found to be of vital aid in securing a good job and a faithful execution of the building contract. He should be on the job in all working hours, and be held responsible for the faithful execution of the contract, and his results

frequently inspected by the commissioners. Appearance of economy is never more unwise than in omitting to employ a good man for *superintendent of construction.*

CONVENIENCES.

Most of the minor arrangements of the accompanying plan would suggest themselves to any competent architect; and to some it may seem that perhaps too many small closets and other "conveniences" have been introduced. None, however, have been proposed, except as they have been recommended by the most intelligent Matrons of similar institutions in the State, from practical use. Each one fills a distinct want, and experience will demonstrate that all tend to economize labor and educate to habits of order and neatness by having a place for everything if everything is kept in its place. If a small saving can be made daily in the labor of the family during the entire life of the house by the use of each of these conveniences, the labor saved will soon return the original cost, and then a continual profit will be drawn from its introduction.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN.

The accompanying plan is arranged to accommodate about seventy-six (76) children—36 boys, 30 girls and 10 infants. If it is desirable to increase any or all of the departments, it can be done, without interfering with the general arrangement, by carrying out the south wall of the enlarged department as far as it is thought desirable, and a corresponding enlargement of the children's dining-room.

COST.

What the building will cost will depend somewhat upon the location and largely upon the nature of the construction. It never pays to build a public building in an unsubstantial manner. The plan proposed can be built as cheaply as any other house of equal size, and convenience, and healthfulness. A square form is, of course, the cheapest for the accommodations it will afford, but it will not afford opportunities for the introduction of light, air and sun, which are essential to a healthful and cheery house.

FOURTH DIVISION.

If it is thought desirable to provide for a fourth division of the children, so as to separate children who are of ages between those in the nursery and those in the boys' and girls' department, it can easily be accomplished without disturbing the harmony of the general plan. Let the girls' day-room, with its clothes room, be carried far enough out to permit the insertion of a room of the desired size, with bath room and other conveniences, which shall be adjoining the family dining room. This would also increase the children's dining room, which the additional department would make necessary.

OUTSIDE WATER CLOSETS.

If water is supplied for the constant flow of a small stream through the vault of the outside water closets, they may be so constructed as to be kept constantly clean and almost odorless—a very important consideration.

BEDS.

Although not connected with the construction of the building, the suggestion is important, that, for children, single beds should be used entirely. The bedsteads should be plain and strong, of wood, and of the best workmanship. If planned for their purpose, of different sizes, made to order and furnished with strong wooden castors, they will be found most satisfactory.

A SCHOOL HOUSE.

Wherever common schools are not accessible, a school house should be built outside and separate from the home building. It should be carefully constructed, especially as to the arrangements for light and ventilation: the light to be admitted on two sides of the building only, and with transom windows.

SUMMARY.

The following are the important features of the accompanying plan:

The building faces the north.

The front portion of it is arranged for the adults of the family.

The children's apartments all face the south, and are exposed on three sides to the purifying influence of the sun.

They are each accessible from the center hall—as convenient for the care of the children and the supervision of the Matron as possible.

A long hall runs through the center of the building, separating the children's apartments from the executive, giving light and ventilation to the center of the house, and separates the noise of the children's department from the front.

Each division of the children has separate apartments, and each apartment connects directly with separate play-grounds.

The grounds are sunny and ample.

Closets, as are required for the use of the occupants and the most approved conveniences for caring for the children, are located in direct connection with the different departments.

Windows are abundant, each room is amply lighted, and the house will be sunny and healthful.

The children's rooms may be enlarged at any time without disturbing the general arrangement of the house.

The house is as economical for construction as can be planned and yet secure the same exposure to air and sun, and these are essential requisites for a children's home.

The building is but two (2) stories above the basement.

Although this arrangement is somewhat more expensive than it would be to secure the same room by an additional story, yet the increased economy of caring for the children, and convenience of supervision, will amply repay for the additional expenditure.

The plan may be thought to be too expensive—as providing too many and too ample conveniences. But, when it is considered that the purpose of the house is to prepare children for admission to the best families of the community, and that the better the surroundings, and the more efficient and elevating the preparation, the sooner will the children find a place in these families, even if the house is more expensive in construction, if it is efficiently and judiciously administered it will prove the more economical.

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